

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE MELODY OF HUMAN BROTHERHOOD

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Spirit, we are traveling by many right roads to Thine abode of light. Guide us onto the highway of Self-knowledge, to which all paths of true religious beliefs eventually lead.

The diverse religions are branches of Thy one immeasurable tree of truth. May we enjoy the luscious fruits of soul realization that hang from the boughs of scriptures of every clime and time.

Teach us to chant in harmony the countless expressions of our supreme devotion. In Thy temple of the earth, in a chorus of many-accented voices, we are singing only to Thee.

O Divine Mother, lift us on Thy lap of universal love. Break Thy vow of silence and sing to us the heart-melting melody of human brotherhood.

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Divine Mother, let every sound that I make have the vibration of Thy voice. Let my every thought be saturated with the consciousness of Thy presence. Let my every feeling glow with Thy love.

THE CHEMISTRY OF FEELINGS

Chemistry shows us that a combination of two elements with different characteristics may produce a third substance manifesting an altogether different quality. Similarly, two or more different kinds of feelings may combine to produce a wholly new feeling, expressing an entirely new quality. And, just as the chemical combination of two elements generates heat, and, conversely, their union may be brought about by heat, so the union of different feelings may be accomplished by stimulation of warmth-producing heart qualities, or emotions.

EMOTIONAL COMBINATIONS Attachment to material objects produces misery. Attachment to spiritual inclinations produces realization. Spiritual attachment plus the peace found in meditation creates bliss. Selfishness plus egotism makes miserliness and material attachment. But selfishness plus consciousness of the higher Self, which sees Itself in all, brings breadth of vision and spiritual perception.

Ambition plus the money-making desire creates selfishness and dissatisfaction. But ambition plus sympathy for others produces a higher form of selfishness that brings lasting joy; a selfishness that is really selflessness, taking pleasure in service to others as to oneself.

Anger may be violent, or tempered by reason. It is usually awakened when one's own or another's interest is hurt. The chemical combination of violent anger plus self-interest or selfishness causes a psychological explosion ending in hysterics or some dangerous act. Anger plus greed and dissipation makes for recklessness, satiety, and indifference. Anger plus devotion to a righteous cause--if tempered with reason--produces some definite result for good in the world.

Hatred of sin (error) plus scorn equals indifference and hurts oneself and others. But hatred of sin plus sensitiveness that seeks to avoid actions that will bring suffering to others produces self-control. Hate the sinner and you yourself fall in the estimation of divine law. Deep peace plus wisdom-guided sense enjoyment makes for self-control. Craving for pleasure plus sense enjoyment creates insatiable desire.

By itself, a particular feeling produces a particular, limited result; but when rightly combined with certain other qualities, it may produce infinite results in spiritual realization. Higher feelings may be developed only by exercising them. Alone, ordinary feelings produce

the dualities and relativities of human experiences--likes and dislikes, pleasure and pain, etc.--serving certain isolated purposes. But when correctly and spiritually united, they produce the higher emotions, which serve to awaken inner realization.

GOOD AND EVIL TENDENCIES Generally speaking, we can say that all the people in the world fall into one or another of two opposite classifications: good or evil, meditative or restless, wise or ignorant, happy or sad. What is more, they mentally "fix" themselves in certain categories. Tell an evil person to be good, or the restless one to be meditative, and both will make you feel that either they do not like to, or they cannot. Their attitudes are due to previous habit, and not to a true desire of the heart. Once our habits are strongly established it is extremely difficult for us to change. The feeling that we cannot change is only a delusion, but it is very hard to overcome that delusion. Therefore do not willfully or carelessly put aside good habits, but cultivate them, and develop a taste for the superior, lasting happiness they bring. Otherwise you may lapse into weak habits and find yourself unable to change when you wish to.

A man may have either very good or very evil tendencies, or somewhat good or somewhat evil tendencies. An exact balance of good and evil qualities is rarely to be found in anyone. There is always a little more tendency to good than to evil, or vice versa. It is a law of nature that if you are a little less evil than good, your evil gradually will be taken away by the greater power of good; and if you have a little less good than evil, your few good habits will gradually be absorbed by the greater number of evil tendencies. The dominant quality, by its very preponderance, tends to attract more of the same quality. "For he that hath, to him shall be given; and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath" (Mark 4:25).

It is just as difficult for some people to be evil as it is for others to be good. But man cannot remain under the influence of error forever, because he is made in the image of God. The beginning spiritual aspirant finds his soldiers of discrimination guided only by the desire to be good. Later, as he meditates longer and prays ardently for inner help, he finds that the calm conviction of latent intuition--awakening inner light--a veteran occult general, emerges from the superconsciousness to guide the forces of discrimination.

Take away the compelling instincts of anger, fear, sense temptation, selfishness, and greed that are planted in man by the unseen cosmic satanic force, and the world would be entirely free from evil. If these evil mental traits did not exist, man's reason, or will, could not be influenced to evil thoughts and actions. People who are easily influenced by evil usually are found to have had predominantly evil instincts from early childhood.

When persons accustomed to anger slavery are drunk with excitement, they become emotional firebugs; at the slightest provocation they light matches of wrathful words and set fire to others' inner peace. A forest fire causes millions of dollars of loss to the Government; emotional

firebugs, by destroying the happiness of others, similarly cause millions of dollars of loss in creative thinking, and incalculable waste of human nerve-energy.

PUNISHMENTS People seeking happiness should shun bad habits, which
AND REWARDS lead to evil actions that sooner or later produce misery. Like a silently burning acid, misery corrodes body, mind, and soul, and cannot be endured long. It should be strictly avoided by exercising wisdom and discrimination.

Remember that the repetition of a few weak actions produces habits of weakness. Most people allow self-created habits of weakness or failure to enslave them. You can save yourself from weak slavery if you have made up your mind to live differently, but your resolution to fight bad habits should be persistent, until success is reached. Whatever your position now, it is you who have put yourself there. Whatever you are now, you have made yourself in the distant or near past. The secret, invisible traces of your own past actions exercise a controlling power over present actions initiated by free choice.

Thus it is you--through the law of cause and effect that governs all human actions--who now order yourself to be punished or rewarded. In past years you probably have suffered enough; now it is time for you to parole yourself from the prison of your own past undesirable habits. Since you are the judge, no jail of suffering, poverty, or ignorance can hold you if you really want to liberate yourself.

The kind omnipresent God has never punished or rewarded you, for from the beginning He has given you the power to reward or punish yourself by the right use or misuse of your own reason and will. If you have transgressed laws of health, prosperity, or wisdom, you punish yourself accordingly with ill health, poverty, or ignorance. Live wisely, cultivating good habits that will bring happiness. Then, when evil material desire tries to exercise the power of habit to destroy the power of good, it will be amazed to find that the offspring of past good habits are ready to give resistance. It is very consoling to know that no matter how strong the powers of evil habit and material desire are, there are soldiers of good habits of this life and past incarnations ready at any moment to give battle. Each person must ascertain for himself whether habits born of his good actions of the past and present are gaining ascendancy in his bodily kingdom.

SEEK HAPPINESS IN GOD To be good is more charming and beneficial
NOT IN MATERIAL THINGS than to be evil, yet even a few good people--by their qualitative worthwhileness--counterbalance the quantitative influence of evil. One moon gives more light than all the stars. The sun drives away the darkness from a space millions of times larger than itself. One good man, whether he preaches or not, by his very presence in the world sets in motion invisible good vibrations; their power is sufficient to counteract even vast volumes of inharmonious vibrations emanating from the wrong thoughts and actions of evil persons.

We are usually born into life rich with smiles, youth, health, and mystic aspirations. As we grow ever older, we begin to lose these riches, and our swelling, thrilling hopes die out. Why do we grow warm with riches only to be frozen suddenly by the chill of poverty? Does happiness come only to vanish? There is a lesson for us in the evanescence of youth and its joys.

If one has lost a diamond and tries to satisfy himself by replacing it with little pieces of broken glass that he finds shining in the sunlight, he is bound to be disillusioned. He cannot find the lost diamond in a pile of broken glass; he is seeking in the wrong place. In the same way, man tries to regain his lost soul-happiness by pursuing momentarily glittering sense pleasures; but when he has had enough of sense happiness he becomes disgusted and tries to find peace and joy where alone they may be found--in the soul.

It is foolish to expect true happiness from material things, for they are powerless to give it; yet many millions of people die of broken hearts trying vainly to find in material things the comfort that only God can impart.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Thou hast issued the commandments of righteousness, O Lord, to safeguard our happiness. May we shun the path of wrongdoing, which always leads to suffering. Let us see that virtue is infinitely more charming than vice. Help us to understand that evil, which at first may seem delightful, gradually acts as poison; and that good, in the beginning often bitter to our taste, eventually becomes nectar-sweet.

ROAST THE SEEDS OF EVIL TENDENCIES

Pat and Mat hated each other. They quarreled when they were boys in school, and when they grew up they were bitter rivals in competing shoe-stores. They even fought one day for the hand of the same fair maiden; and Pat, being slightly stronger, gave Mat a sound beating. Pat walked away with the girl, leaving Mat senseless on the sidewalk. When he "came to," Mat was filled with shame, sorrow, and disgust. Determining to get even with Pat sometime, Mat shifted his interest and his business from Philadelphia to Miami.

Although Pat soon forgot all about the insult, hurt, and inconvenience that he had caused Mat, the latter, being the maltreated party, could not wipe from his memory the grievance against Pat. Every night before going to bed Mat would affirm: "Day by day, in every way, I am forgiving Pat more and more." But after several months he realized that during his daily affirmation of forgiveness he had actually been hatching the egg of revengefulness, and that in the background of his mind he had really been praying for an opportunity to straighten out his old grudge.

After a time, Pat went to Miami for a vacation, unwittingly drawn there by the strangely attractive power of mutual hatred. Not suspecting any trouble, he guilelessly went for a stroll one evening, although it was dark and drizzly. As he walked along a lonely road, he passed under the tiled roof of an open shed adjoining a warehouse. Unbeknownst to him, Mat, having found out that his old enemy was in town, was silently dogging his steps in rubber-soled shoes. Mat was ready to pay back with compound interest what Pat had done to him in Philadelphia.

Pitter-patter! the drizzle changed into raindrops. Under cover of their sound, Mat pursued his quarry more closely. He was delighted to behold on the ground ahead a large tile that had evidently loosened and fallen, unbroken, from the roof of the warehouse shed. Just after Pat stepped over this fallen tile, Mat knocked him senseless.

Pat lay on the cold, muddy sod beneath the shed much longer than Mat had lain on the sidewalk after the thrashing at his hands in Philadelphia, long ago. Two hours passed. The sky had ceased to weep, and was smiling with moonbeams when he regained consciousness, puzzled to find himself lying in a pool of blood on the cold earth beneath the shed. By the moonlight peeping through the shed roof where the tile had loosened, Pat could see all around him. He saw then the fallen tile, mutely yet eloquently lying near his head. Looking up at the square opening in the tile roof overhead, he thought to himself, "What bad luck! Evidently the tile loosened itself under the cumulative pelting of the rain and I ran under the shed to escape the rain just in time for the tile to fall on my head."

Pat's reasoning is an illustration of how we tend to forget our misdeeds, though the self-created results of such actions never forget us. The consequences of our good or bad actions silently pursue us through the darkness of our ignorance. Just as the cow can find its calf amidst a thousand other calves, so the results of our actions in this life and past lives pursue us doggedly and find us wherever we happen to be. If Pat had weighed the consequences of his action after beating Mat, and had made up with Mat, no injurious result would have germinated for him in the dark womb of the future.

The moral is, increase the power of wisdom and meditation in order to burn up the ungerminated seeds of evil tendencies latent within your mind. Judge well before you act, for after you have acted you must reap a specific result of that action. Remember that every action leaves traces that are stored up as tendencies in your mind. Unless you counteract latent evil tendencies by becoming better and better every day, there is no telling what you may become in the future, should the germination of seeds of evil tendencies suddenly come about under favorable evil influences.

A man can be sure of himself only if he meditates more and more deeply, and in the fire of Self-realization and calmness consumes all

the seeds of evil tendencies that lie ungerminated in his subconscious. Those weed seeds which secrete themselves in the subconscious mind can be roasted during the contact of the conscious and subconscious minds with the superconsciousness of deep meditation. Seeds of evil tendencies thus roasted in the fire of wisdom cannot germinate. So do not sit idle, no matter how great you are. Keep on burning out the latent evil of forgotten incarnations by kindling greater fires of goodness in meditation. All the crowding seeds of worries that infest the tracts of the conscious and the subconscious minds burn into a blaze of bliss when they touch the fiery superconscious peace of meditation.

AFFIRMATION

I am thinking with the minds of all. I am feeling through all feelings. The flowers of joy blooming on all heart-soils are mine. I am eternal laughter. My smiles are dancing through all faces. I am the wave of enthusiasm in all hearts. I am the King of Silence sitting on the throne of emotion.

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TEACH ME TO SPEND FOR GOD'S WORK

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Give me holy health,
 But give my brothers more,
That I may enjoy my greater health
 In the greater myself.
Give me power,
 But to my dear ones give it more abundantly,
That I may wield the strength of all minds
 United in my mind.
Give me wisdom,
 That I may make my loved ones more wise,
And that I may feel its rays spreading
 On the vast tract of merged brother-souls.

Teach me to behold through all eyes,
 Work through all hands,
 And feel my heartthrobs in all.
Teach me to feel, act, strive, earn,
 And especially to spend, for all--
 As I do for myself.

I want health, to be a model for others' health
 As well as for my own.
I want to be efficient,
 To turn inefficiency away from earth's door.
I want wisdom's freedom,
 That I may enjoy my liberty only
In the universal freedom of all--
 In the spiritual emancipation of all!

PRAYER

Divine Mother, teach me to remember that enthusiasm and willingness go hand in hand with fresh supplies of energy.

IMPORTANT ENERGIZATION AND HEALING EXERCISES

We know that a dead man cannot inhale oxygen or absorb sunshine or digest food, because life force is absent. Life force is therefore the first direct condition governing our physical and mental strength. Our thoughts, will, feeling, and muscular power; the action of heart, brain, and lungs; the pancreas, liver, spleen, and other digestive organs; and the glands--all depend for their existence upon the vital principle. Life force is the inner electricity that runs the brain factory that, in turn, produces and exports creative ideas and imports new impressions, and that looks after the management of the entire body.

The heart is the factory that cleanses the system and distributes food to billions of hungry living body cells. The stomach and intestines remove from food the right nutritive elements for the repair and replenishment of osseous, nervous, epithelial, adipose, and muscular tissues. They are a grand "kitchen factory" that prepares the right food for the various tissues. Yet the billions of bodily cells, the internal organs, and the sensory nerves are really kept alive and properly working through one vital power. Although the physical body appears to be maintained entirely by food from the outside, the truth is that externally supplied food would be useless to the body if it were not converted into vitality by the secret Cosmic Life Energy.

When you practice the SRF Recharging Exercises, you employ this inner life force to heal and revivify the body parts. The recharging and energization exercises (Lesson 8-A) are all to be done slowly, gently, and rhythmically; never jerkily. Every movement should be harmonious. If any part of the body is especially weak, send the energy there very slowly and gently as you exercise, and the part will be gradually strengthened. By intensity of effort you can very soon heal yourself of weakness in a body part, since by your concentrated practice of the Recharging Exercises you bring the true source of curative power, the Cosmic Life Energy, into the diseased tissues. You can feel the actual current of energy being switched on in your body and direct it wherever you want it. The vibration that you feel is not voluntary movement; it is caused by the charge of energy entering the body. Do the exercises willingly and gladly. Except in those that call for bending, keep the spine straight and the body upright. The exercises will give you grace and freedom of movement. More than that, as you perfect your practice you will realize that you are not the body: that the body is only your servant, and you are the immortal life energy that lights the bulb of flesh.

After graduation from school, the days of healthful regular exercise

are usually over, and the days of overeating and resulting sickness begin. Many people do not realize that uniformly good health depends upon:

- (1) proper eating, less eating, and occasional fasting;
- (2) proper elimination;
- (3) proper exercise, fresh air, and sunbaths;
- (4) conservation of vital energy by self-control;
- (5) good thoughts and cheerfulness;
- (6) calm meditation.

Wrong habits, overindulgence, and lack of exercise constitute abuses of the senses and should be avoided.

Take sunbaths as often as you can, from ten minutes to half an hour a day, if possible, depending on the sensitivity of one's skin and the strength of the sun's rays.

Six times a day breathe deeply at least three times in the fresh air:

- (1) First, exhale quickly through mouth and nostrils.
- (2) Inhale slowly through the nostrils only, counting 1 to 12.
- (3) Hold breath, counting 1 to 6.
- (4) Exhale, counting 1 to 6.

Try to establish the habit of doing this whenever you are walking outdoors. Let the count during inhalation, holding the breath, and exhalation be modified if necessary for comfort; but maintain the ratio. If you inhale to a count of 8, for example, hold the breath to a count of 4, and exhale to a count of 4. A person of average health and lung capacity should have no difficulty in maintaining the 12-6-6 ratio, however.

The exercise routine given in Lesson 8-A should be a basic daily practice of all Self-Realizationists. However, there are many other exercises given from time to time that may be practiced for specific purposes, or as a short supplementary routine to be practiced at any time during the day you feel a need for it. Some of these exercises are variations or abbreviated forms of exercises with which you have already become familiar through those given in Lesson 8-A.

STOMACH EXERCISES The following stomach exercises will aid digestion and peristaltic movement, thus helping to eliminate constipation and reduce obesity. The exercises should be practiced daily, preferably in the morning after leaving bed, or at any other time when the stomach is comparatively empty (not sooner than one hour after meals).

1. (a) Standing in front of an armchair, lean forward, and with your arms held out straight, grasp the arms of the chair.
- (b) Exhale quickly and completely.
- (c) Keeping the breath out, slowly draw in the abdomen as far as possible; then push it out as far as possible.
- (d) Repeat three times, without inhaling (or breathing in) during that time.

(e) Inhale.

Repeat the entire exercise five times. In case of indigestion or constipation, repeat it ten times.

2. (a) Stand erect, with eyes closed.
- (b) Place both hands on abdomen, one above the other, with slight pressure.
- (c) Contract and tense lower portion of abdomen.
- (d) While holding tension in lower section, contract and tense the upper abdomen.
- (e) Relax both upper and lower abdomen.

Repeat this exercise six times.

WALKING AND RUNNING EXERCISES Practice of "in place" walking and running exercises twice daily in the fresh air will do much to keep the body fit. (People who have weak hearts, however, should omit the running exercise.) Even though you may feel tired, a short practice of the walking and running exercises and a few or all of the Recharging Exercises helps greatly to relieve fatigue.

To perform the walking exercise, take off your shoes and stand about four feet away from a wide-open window indoors or, better still, on an open porch. While standing in one place, go through the motions of walking, but exaggerate the upward motion of the legs: instead of raising your left foot only a few inches from the floor, raise it high, bending the knee, so the knee is even with the buttock. At the same time bend the right forearm upward, keeping the elbow by your side. Then drop left foot to the ground, and lower the right forearm. Next raise right foot, until knee is even with the buttock, and bend left forearm up, keeping elbow at side. Then go on alternating left and right, walking in place. If you count each "step" as "one," walk from 25 to 100 "steps."

The running exercise is performed by standing in one place and going through the motions of running. The knees should be bent so that the heel is brought up in back as if to strike the buttock. Arms are held stationary at the sides, elbows bent. One should run on the toes, lightly. A count of 50 "steps" is good.

OTHER VALUABLE EXERCISES Whenever you want to relax any body part, gently tense it, hold tension, counting 1 to 3, then relax quickly and feel the vibration of the energy as it retires from that part. Keep the relaxed part still--forget it.

Now stand up and with eyes closed tense the whole body--all parts at once--and then let go, throwing your breath out forcefully and relaxing all parts at once. Do not move. After a few moments again tense the whole body quickly, and let go, throwing the breath out and relaxing. You will then be perfectly relaxed (except for the muscles employed in maintaining a standing position). This exercise may also be practiced

in a reclining position, thus affording complete relaxation. When energy is withdrawn by practice of this technique, all parts of the body are relaxed and the body is calm.

Any time you are tired or worried, tense the whole body, then relax, throwing your breath out, and you will become calm. When only low or partial tensing precedes release of tension, not all tension is removed; but when you tense high, so that you are vibrating with energy, and then quickly relax or "let go," you achieve perfect relaxation. Practice the following any time a need is felt for relaxation or for healing of the body part involved.

1. (a) Tense the right arm until it vibrates.
(b) Keeping the elbow at the side, lift the forearm until the fist is at the shoulder, as if lifting a weight of 5 to 25 pounds.
(c) Relax and let the arm down.
(d) Repeat the exercise with the left forearm, and then continue, alternating the right and left arms. Then practice lifting and lowering both arms simultaneously.
2. (a) With the arms outstretched at the sides so that they are parallel to the ground, and with the palms of the closed fists turned upward, tense both arms until they vibrate.
(b) Bending the arms at the elbows, bring the fists toward the shoulders. Pull with enough tension to vibrate, as if you were pulling a heavy weight from both sides.
(c) Relax, dropping the arms at the sides.

Repeat.

3. (a) With the arms outstretched sideways, parallel to the ground, exhale and bring the arms forward until the palms touch, at the same time relaxing all the body parts.
(b) Inhale, tensing all of the twenty body parts and outstretching the arms to the starting position.
(c) Relax, dropping the arms and exhaling slowly.

Repeat.

4. (a) From a standing position, grasp the arms of a chair.
(b) Exhale, relaxing and dropping quickly to a squatting position, with the buttocks resting on the heels.
(c) Inhale and tense the body, counting 1 to 20.
(d) Still holding the tension, stand up and vibrate with tension.
(e) Exhale, relaxing and dropping once more to the squatting position.

Repeat.

HEALING Proper eating is a vital factor in overcoming all problems concerning health, beauty, youthfulness, and reducing or increasing weight; but very often a problem remains for the vital force to solve definitely and quickly, by effecting

a healing. Hence the following exercises, which involve conscious application of the vital force in the body, will be found to be immensely beneficial to any weak tissues or body organs.

To remove pain from an arm or a leg, or to strengthen a limb, or to rejuvenate tired muscles, practice the following technique on the affected muscle or body part:

- (a) Contract the muscle (or muscles) gently with deep attention while exhaling the breath to a count of 1 to 20.
- (b) Release contraction of muscles and inhale.

Repeat six times, practicing in the morning and whenever else it may be necessary. Weak calves or thighs may be strengthened by the practice of this technique.

EXERCISE FOR THE KNEES

- (a) Squat down, sitting on the heels, and exhale.
- (b) Quickly stand up and inhale.
- (c) Holding the breath, gently contract or tense the muscles of the whole body.
- (d) Exhale and relax.

Repeat 10 times, morning and night.

TWO EXERCISES FOR THE SPINE

1.
 - (a) Sitting erect on a chair, rotate the head counterclockwise 5 times.
 - (b) Rotate the head clockwise 5 times.
2.
 - (a) Sit erect, on a chair, and put interlocked hands at the back of the head.
 - (b) Quickly jerk the head and spine back.
 - (c) Release the hands and bend over, touching the toes with the hands.

Repeat 6 times, morning and evening.

FOR DIGESTIVE POWER

- (a) Exhale, keeping the breath out.
- (b) While the breath is out, contract abdomen and stomach, concentrating deeply upon the navel. Count 1 to 20.
- (c) Release contraction of stomach and abdomen and inhale.

Repeat 6 to 12 times, morning and night. Practice only when stomach is empty.

FOR HEADACHES

- (a) Press the palm of one hand against the back of the head and press the other palm very lightly on the forehead.
- (b) Inhale, and hold breath, while with deepest attention gently

- contracting the muscles at the top of the head.
(c) Exhale and release contraction.

Repeat 4 to 6 times during headaches.

FOR BRAIN POWER

- (a) Exhale, keeping the breath out.
- (b) Contract the muscles of the head gently, holding full concentration there and counting 1 to 15.
- (c) Inhale, releasing the contraction of the muscles.

Repeat 6 times.

FOR THE NERVES

- (a) Inhale, holding the breath.
- (b) Gently contract the entire body, all muscles at once.
- (c) Hold the contraction for a count of 1 to 20, with deep attention on the entire body.
- (d) Exhale, releasing the contraction.

Repeat 3 times, at any time you feel weak and nervous.

FOR THE EYES

- (a) Exhale, keeping the breath out.
- (b) With the eyes closed, contract the eyelids and brows very lightly.
- (c) Hold the contraction of the eyes with deep concentration, counting 1 to 20.
- (d) Release the contraction and inhale.

Repeat 7 times, morning and night.

AFFIRMATION

I will eat wisely, exercise properly, keep good company, perform good deeds, keep a clear conscience, and live in healthful surroundings. I will learn to smile, especially when things go wrong, and thus--learning to smile always--I will instill new life into my body cells, which are the builders and sustainers of my fleshly mansion.

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DIVINE JOY

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Father, bless us with Thine intoxicating, ever-new, joyous, supremely satisfying communion. Teach us to drink Thee, that every blood cell, every thought, and every feeling may become saturated with Thy joy and have their pleasure-thirst quenched forever.

After we have tasted Thee, lead us to temptation, if Thou wilt. After we are sure of Thy most tempting everlasting gift of Thyself, then test us with all Thy temptations, if Thou wilt.

But bless us first with the light of godly habits, so that whenever the darkness of bad habits approaches it will be spontaneously driven away. Teach us to be so attached to Thee that we cannot be at all attracted to material pleasures.

Millions love matter because they meet it first. Millions do not love Thee because they know not of Thine alluring love. Teach us by Thy love to conquer all love for worldly life.

Divine Beloved, why dost Thou not come first in human life? O Father, how canst Thou expect frail souls, ignorant of Thee and burdened with bad habits, to know Thine all-healing joy?

Of all Thy punishments, the greatest is forgetfulness of Thee.

PRAYER

O God, Thou Holy, Creative, Vibratory Force, teach me to make a bouquet of the variously hued flowers of filial, conjugal, friendly, and parental loves, and to lay it on the altar of my heart where Thou reignest.

SPIRITUALIZING THE CREATIVE FORCE

To help the propagation of the species, Nature has implanted in the human body the creative impulse. It is therefore one of the strongest instincts and impelling forces in man, and Nature takes a silent and awful revenge on those that misuse or trifle with her holy method of creation. The "fig leaf" consciousness of evil that tries to throw a veil of unholiness on this creative principle has brought a great deal of moral and material suffering into the world. The creative principle has a twofold purpose. When it is directed toward the nerves embedded in the generative area, man feels an instinctive desire to create physically. When it is lifted up through the spine to the brain, it frees man of the desire for sex creation and confers on him divine illumination and power. Misuse of this creative power for sense pleasure makes one matter-bound, groveling in the mud of the senses.

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| HOW TO REGULATE CREATIVE IMPULSE | Man is not culpable for the creative impulse, which is nature-born. Persons who are unable to control this--nature's most powerful force for propagating the human species--are blamed by society; yet they are not taught how to govern this instinct instead of being governed by it. Not even lifelong intellectual or medical study will enable the student to control this instinct. The practical method of controlling it should be taught. Daily exercise and proper diet are important aids to self-control. Eat little or no meat; have nuts and other proper substitutes for it, and an abundance of raw vegetables and fruits. |
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One should know that during physical passion there are five courses open to the individual:

1. Dissipation of creative energy--the usual practice--which is unnecessary, weakening, and a cause of disease and premature old age.
2. Using the creative energy for the physical creation of a child.
3. Using the energy for creating "spiritual brain children," i.e., converting the creative energy into thought power by sublimation and transmutation. It is not necessary (as some imagine) to dissipate the creative energy; rather, at the moment of passion, one should immediately engage his mind in creative work: artistic, literary, inventive, or business work--whichever is the most interesting to him. To follow this plan is to divert the creative energy into brain channels and to convert it into higher forms of intellectual and spiritual expression.

4. Using the creative energy in sports or strenuous physical exercise; for example, the running exercise in Lesson 34.
5. Withdrawing the energy, through breath, from the creative organs upward into the region of the medulla oblongata. Put your mind on the area in the body where the generative organs are located and draw a deep breath slowly, thinking of the breath as starting from that particular area. Imagine that with the inhaling breath you are reversing the downward flow of the life energy, drawing it from the coccyx, upward through the spine to the spot between the eyebrows. Hold breath and mind in between the eyebrows, mentally counting one to twenty-five or more (or as long as you can hold breath comfortably), and think of yourself as absorbing the passion and life current into the reservoir of life energy present between the eyebrows and medulla oblongata. Then exhale and relax, freeing yourself from the bondage of passion. Repeat the foregoing method three times with closed eyes. During relaxation, always think of the physical instinct as having been expelled from the body. Do not seek solitude. This is the teaching of the great scriptures of India.

SPIRITUAL MARRIAGE A husband and wife should be loyal to each other and try to make each other happy in every way. The spiritual wife should not forsake the unspiritual husband, nor should the spiritual husband forsake the unspiritual wife--they should try to influence and help each other as long as it is possible to do so. This lesson is written for the sole purpose of helping those who wish to develop moral character and self-control; those who are seeking to restore harmony in unhappy marriages; and those wishing to prevent wrong marriages and divorces.

To trifle with physical passion is to gamble away untold joys of life. The million candles of happiness in the hall of life are burned all at once by indiscretion in marriage. The evanescent excitement in physical communion is nothing compared to the bliss that follows by the regulating and the withdrawing of this creative impulse up into the brain region for the procreation of spiritual and intellectual qualities of love, consideration, divine patience, sympathy, determination, keenness, calmness, realization, and knowledge of the art of spiritual procreation which enables one to perform revolutionizing work in spiritual or material life.

In married life, respect for and tolerance of each other's views lead to happiness. Married people should refrain from contradicting each other before others and from quarreling between themselves over little things. Husbands and wives should never discuss their troubles with others (excepting of course a qualified spiritual teacher or marriage counselor).

Love is superior to weakness or strength in body or mind, and as such should be unconditioned. Love cannot be wrested from another; it may only be received as a spontaneous gift. Love grows and thrives in an atmosphere of tolerance, forgiveness, and trust; it is marred by jeal-

ousy. In distant closeness love lives. In wrong familiarity it dies.

The ratio between love and physical indulgence is that the greater the love, the less the physical craving, and vice versa. Husband and wife should feel love whenever they see each other, and not the physical instinct, otherwise they will march toward the pitfalls of boredom, dislike, and separation. A husband should consider his wife to be a clean temple for creating and caring for a new soul. The wife should keep her body-temple free from unclean thoughts. The specific nature of the mental state of parents during this period of creation is the magnetic force that draws a particular type of disembodied soul into the mother's body-temple. Thoughts concentrated upon the physical invite sensually inclined souls. Souls with a more highly developed nature refuse the invitation of degrading physical attraction.

The Hindu scriptures say that during this period a current of life force is generated, which serves as a door through which disembodied astral souls may enter. Good souls do not enter through this door of life current if it has vibrations of low passionate mentality. They turn away at a distance. They prefer to wait rather than to take a hasty rebirth in an undesirable place. So all husbands and wives should remember to cooperate spiritually, mentally, and physically in order to invite a sacred soul into the cell temple of sperm and ovum that they create. Married people should invoke good souls to come and live with them.

Parents should prepare their minds months in advance in order to create a spiritual child. During the specific period of creation, thoughts of invoking a noble soul into a temple of uniting sperm and ovum cells must predominate. At this time, thought should remain between the eyebrows, directing the holy work of creation; it should never be allowed to run down and become identified with passion. In married life, adultery is committed by those living wholly on the physical plane. Such persons are punished by boredom, mutual hatred, and final separation. The creative instinct is nature's means of continuing creation and should not be converted into a play with the senses. If the creative instinct is withdrawn from the coccygeal region and sent through the spine to the spot in the middle of the forehead and brain, it begins to create offspring of spiritual realization. Married people, after creating one or two children, should learn how to thus spiritually commune and procreate. Husband and wife should consider their union as a union of Nature and Spirit, of feeling and knowledge. Marriage is meant principally for spiritual union, and incidentally for material union. Elderly parents should commune only on the spiritual plane, intoxicated with mutual love, satisfying physical cravings by mental loving.

ADVICE TO MARRIED AND UNMARRIED PEOPLE

1. Realize the mind's power over the body. Undesirable physical consciousness should be banished by diverting the mind to a subject or some work that is deeply interesting to you.
2. Undesirable creative impulse should be regulated first psychologically and then physiologically. The attack to gain control

of this impulse must be from within and without.

3. Avoid anything that stimulates the creative impulse through the medium of the sense of sight, touch, and so forth. Married people would be wise to dance only with each other.
4. Avoid dwelling upon and discussing undesirable stories that unconsciously feed your creative instinct with degrading thoughts.
5. Try to understand the physiology of vital parts through the study of some standard medical book.
6. Boys and girls, men and women, should play or talk or see one another, not with a physical consciousness, but with the thought of purity and holy friendship.
7. Remember, overindulgence in the physical relation in married life is a sin. Marriage is meant for spiritual reunion of souls and not for a physical license. Moderation mixed with self-discipline and complete mastery over the creative impulse awakens the powers of spiritual perception, and demonstrates the highest virtue.
8. Those unmarried people who never break the law of celibacy create in themselves a powerful magnetism that will draw to each one a true soul companion, if they desire to marry. Others attract wrong companions through the misuse and misguidance of the creative instinct. Spiritual magnetism, if lost in wrong marriage, or in unmarried life through indiscretion, can be revived by the right practice of the Self-Realization Fellowship system of charging the body with vital energy, and by right meditation.

Lastly, unmarried people can unite the creative nature-force with the soul-force within them spiritually, by learning the right method of meditation and its application to physical life. Such people may not have to go through the experience of material marriage. They may learn to marry their feminine physical impulse to the masculine soul within. Unmarried people, in seeking a life companion should not wholly depend upon their own inclinations, but should consult their parents, and above all, persons with true inner vision. The law of cause and effect (karma), if properly applied, will help a great deal as a guide to the right union of the opposite sexes. In India, in most cases, the marriages are happy, permanent, successful, and highly spiritual because the persons concerned live according to the above principles. Above all, remember that marriage is the reunion in the Absolute Spirit, of the divided feeling- and knowledge-nature of God.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Spirit, through its force of universal attraction, is gradually absorbing all objects created out of Itself by the misguided force of satanic delusion. Through the influence of the creative force projected by God all living beings and human souls have allowed themselves to be lured away from God and have become attached to matter.

Yet no soul can be completely lost, because of the tremendous attractive force of God's love, which is ever calling His truant children back to Himself. Those who do not heed His call may be delayed, but none can resist forever the call of the eternal bliss-pipings of Spirit.

BUDDHA AND THE COURTESAN--Part 1

In India, Buddha is considered one of the incarnations of God. He lived about five hundred years before Christ and was the son of a king of India. The royal father of Gautama (who was later to become known as Buddha) had surrounded the young prince with every conceivable luxury and beauty, and arranged an idyllic marriage for his son. Gautama thus grew into manhood thinking of the world as a place of endless happy events.

However, Prince Gautama was curious about the world outside the palace gardens, and one day secretly went out with his charioteer to see for himself. The handsome youth was shocked to the very depths of his being to see for the first time in his life a shriveled-looking old man, a dying man, and a corpse. He looked at his celestially beautiful, healthy body and asked the charioteer if his body too would grow old and decay. Reluctantly the charioteer said: "O Prince, all human flesh is subject to sickness, decrepitude, and death." After hearing this, the young prince began to brood over the delusion of earthly life. One night, while his wife and child slept, Gautama took a last look at them with tear-bedimmed eyes and left in quest of Truth which would free mankind forever from sorrow and suffering and which would give him complete understanding of the mystery of life and death.

The prince practiced many austerities prescribed by Hindu yogis. He is said to have spent seven years in fasting and other spiritual disciplines. At last, while meditating under a banyan tree* in Bodh Gaya, India, he found illumination. Then he ate, and nourished his body, and began to preach in India his gospel of mercy and equal love for all creatures, man and animal alike. He taught complete renunciation; the goal: attainment of nirvana (the state of desirelessness or freedom from reincarnation). Later, his missionaries spread the gospel of Buddha all over India, Japan, China, and other parts of the world.

The state of nirvana, or cessation of dualistic existence, is often misinterpreted as annihilation of the self. Buddha, however, meant an-

*The pipal or bo tree, a variety of banyan.

nihilation of the deluded ego, or pseudo self; the little self must be overcome in order that the real, eternal Self may achieve liberation from human incarnation. Buddha's doctrine, with its emphasis on a negative state of being (annihilation of the ego or little self) as the goal of ultimate attainment, was later supplanted in India by the doctrine of Swami Shankara, founder of the great monastic Swami Order, who taught that the goal of life is the positive attainment of the "ever-conscious, ever-existing, ever-newly blissful state of oneness with Spirit."

(To be continued)

AFFIRMATION

Teach me to discipline my senses, and
to substitute for flesh temptation the
greater temptation of soul happiness.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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INVINCIBLE LION OF THE SELF

By Paramahansa Yogananda

A cub of the Divine Lion, somehow I found myself confined in a sheepfold of frailties and limitations. Fear-filled, living long with sheep, day after day I bleated. I forgot my affrighting bellow that banishes all enemy sorrows.

O Invincible Lion of the Self! Thou didst drag me to the water hole of meditation, saying: "Thou art a lion, not a sheep! Open thine eyes, and roar!"

After Thy hard shakings of spiritual urge, I gazed into the crystal pool of peace. Lo, I saw my face like unto Thine!

I know now that I am a lion of cosmic power. Bleating no more, I shake the error forest with reverberations of Thine almighty voice. In divine freedom I bound through the jungle of earthly delusions, devouring the little creatures of vexing worries and timidities, and the wild hyenas of disbelief.

O Lion of Liberation, ever send through me Thy roar of all-conquering courage!

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

As Thy freeborn offspring, I want to train and use my own will; but only with Thy guidance, O Father! May all my activities lead me closer to Thy paradise of all-fulfillment.

I would be Thy happy child of Infinitude, realizing that in the divine plan Thy sons were not meant to live in a desolation of fruitless aspirations and withered hopes.

Teach me to break the shameful cords of lethargy. May I blaze my way tirelessly through the wilderness of limitations into the Fair New Land.

WHY YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED AS YOU WISHED

Almost everyone feels at times that he is not making any inner progress; that he is not changing or improving, in spite of his efforts. Various factors may hold us back. We have to analyze life to determine what those factors may be. It is necessary first to think back over one's childhood, to the time when first began to dawn the consciousness that this life is a series of changing conditions imposed on us. Very early in life we become aware that certain changes, certain environments into which we have been thrown, are congenial; they tally with our inner ideas of comfort and pleasure, and we like them. We also discover that certain other conditions arising from time to time thwart our desires and cause us discomfort and unhappiness. One naturally wants to eliminate those conditions that he finds uncongenial, and to bring about those that make him happy. With the growing realization that life is a series of changes, we also become aware that we have to go either backward or forward as we adapt ourselves to each new change. It is impossible to remain stationary. A man immersed in the ocean has to keep moving; otherwise he will drown. To avoid drowning in the ocean of life also necessitates constant change on our part.

Any change in oneself that promotes happiness and well-being is good, whereas changes that bring unhappiness are not good. Anything that is painful--mentally, physically, or spiritually--ought to be eliminated. However, much as a person wants to avoid unsavory experiences in life, often he does not know how to prevent such changes--he does not realize that his own previous actions and attitudes have invited them. From the very beginning of life one may have suffered from fear, or sensitivity, or nervousness, or anger or some such weakness without being particularly aware of the extent of it. Then suddenly there arises a situation that brings forth the realization that one has an uncontrollable temper, or a strong sexual nature, or a tendency to be greedy, or to fight with people all the time; or to be moody, touchy, too frivolous, or too serious.

Some people do learn that every human being has free choice, but

they often find that their free choice is overruled by habits created by past actions in this life and in former lives. For instance, a person who was constantly ill-tempered in his past life will be born with that strong tendency in this life; to overcome that trait and its effects on his life he will have to change, by persistently employing thoughts and actions to cultivate the opposite quality of evenness.

But even though one may have found out these things about himself fairly early in life, he may nevertheless find himself unable to change. Looking back he realizes that whenever any of his wrong habits have tortured him he has wanted to get away from them. Why has he not done so? Man's habits trail him down the years and are his greatest tormentors. Why does he not rid himself of the causes of his unhappiness?

MENTAL AND PHYSICAL
LAZINESS RETARD
SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Negligence is the first cause. We tend to say to ourselves, even when suffering from the ill effects of wrong habits, "As long as I can get along somehow it doesn't matter." Such mental and physical laziness is the root cause of failure to improve. We have no idea how much we have to pay for mental and physical laziness! Who has not passed up opportunities--perhaps to make money, or to change for the better an unsuitable environment, or to overcome an old habit, or to make himself and others more comfortable--because of lack of effort. Most people are too lazy to try as hard as would be necessary to rid themselves of evil habits, or inharmoonious environment, or whatever the cause of their unhappiness may be. They weakly allow wrong tendencies to take a terrible toll of their life happiness.

Those who have failed to change as they wish, therefore, may simply have been mentally and physically lazy. Physical laziness is forgivable, because sometimes a person needs rest, but mental laziness is inexcusable. Most people are extremely lazy about thinking and reasoning! Yet in thought lies freedom. As soon as man thinks he will find a way out of difficulties.

In dreams a thin person can make himself fat by thinking he is fat. Such is the power of thought. It is the greatest power we have. Thought controls the physical, financial, moral, spiritual, in fact, all the conditions of life. Since man has such a great power at his disposal, why does he not change as he wishes? Because of concentrating too much on the limited sources of sustenance of body and mind, and because of not fully using the greater power of thought.

ANALYZE
YOURSELF

The person who sincerely desires to change should analyze himself. One who has not kept a mental diary should begin this salutary practice. The knowledge of just how much and in what way he fails in the daily experiences of life may stimulate him to more effort to be what he should be. By keeping such a journal and by using discrimination to destroy the bad habits that create pain and suffering for ourselves and others, we will get rid of them. Every night we should ask ourselves: "How long have I been with God today?" We should analyze also how much we have deeply thought, how much we have accomplished in our duties, how much we have done for oth-

ers, how we have governed ourselves in the various situations of the day.

Analysis will reveal how much or how little power we have over our emotions and habits. Whenever a person makes up his mind in the morning that he will not that day allow himself to be carried away by mechanical habits, he should stick to that resolution. To be free, one must snatch himself from the stream of mechanical habits on which he floats like a leaf toward the falls of delusion and destruction. Most people don't seem to care; they let themselves drift. But the wise person makes this resolve: "As long as I have to live, I am going to do what I must to improve, not what I am led to do through habits I mistakenly formed in the past." Then he carries out that resolution.

KEEP GOOD COMPANY Bad company frequently inhibits one's intentions to change for the better. We are certain to be influenced by the people we have around us. Why be with people who are suspicious, or who like to gossip, or who will try to make one indulge in other petty and hurtful actions of which he doesn't really approve? Even a person who is sufficiently developed to be safe from such influences should avoid them.

A man must carefully watch his company. He who surrounds himself with flatterers who encourage him in his weaknesses will stifle his ability to analyze himself. In time he will be afraid to mix with people who might correct him. Remember, the power exerted by good or bad company is greater than will power. Those who have a nervous or an angry temperament should mix with calm, soothing persons who act as emotional shock-absorbers; thus the flighty ones may be inspired to be calm like their friends, and so improve. But if easily angered persons mix with others who are as hot-tempered as they are, someone may come to actual physical harm. Even a fairly calm and self-controlled person who mixes with emotional, excitable types will tend to lose his own poise and self-control.

Most people are just like animals in the zoo. They are always howling with emotions. Man is meant to control himself. As human beings we have been divinely endowed with self-control. We are not wholly free, but we have been given the key to freedom. In spite of this, many people live an animal-like existence, not fully using their free will and intelligence to gain self-mastery. The tiger is controlled by the instinct to kill. He cannot help himself. But man has been endowed with free choice and intelligence, that he may steadily improve his human status instead of remaining instinct-bound like the animals.

ATTACHMENT TO POSSESSIONS Attachment to material possessions is always a deterrent to spiritual progress. Some people work hard and save money for some worldly goal, and then suddenly something unforeseen happens. Everything is gone and they are desolate. Why? Because they placed their faith in and conditioned their happiness by material acquisitions instead of depending on the Infinite Source. Who can be happy constantly thinking of his material comfort, or always fearing what will happen to his possessions when he dies, or trying to decide to whom he will leave his money! Furniture and other material

possessions are really burdens.

St. Francis lived in a shed; he existed solely on scraps of food given to him. Yet he did not suffer, for the splendor of God was within and around him because he had refused to anchor his happiness on material conditions. St. Anthony lived in a tomb for many years; sometimes he had bread and sometimes he didn't. We too live by God's grace and not by bread; the more we concentrate on this truth and the less we think about the body, the more the Divine Friend will help us.

Once when I went to visit one of my students I saw that there were only three people living on a very big estate, so I said: "Here you are keeping up this huge place for the comfort of only three people. Why not give it up?" But they were bound to their possessions; that attachment held them back from changing their inner lives for the better. Yet furniture doesn't mean a thing to real happiness! A yogi sitting on a little blanket under a tree can be one with all creation! He has the furniture of God--the mountains, moon, and stars--to decorate his earth-home. In that consciousness lies freedom and happiness. A yogi who is inwardly one with the Creator can go anywhere and feel that everything is his; he can enjoy everything without taking on the burden of ownership. Nothing is really ours; it is the consciousness of possession that makes us attached to things. Man is meant to live for God in this world. As long as he lives in it for himself he does not evolve to a higher consciousness; instead, being subject to the law of change, he gradually changes for the worse.

One should not give too much importance to the home and its furnishings. It is all right to have and to enjoy possessions, but it is harmful to be possessed by them. Whether living in luxury or in simple surroundings, the yogi is free. Simple living does not mean being dirty or lazy. We should give attention to the body that we love so much only enough to take care of it as best we can. It is only a useful beast to carry the soul through life. St. Francis used to call his body "Brother Donkey." He knew its true purpose, just as he knew that in the simplicities of life lie the riches of renunciation; and that even poverty need not be slavery but, rightly considered, freedom from the enslavement and serfdom of possessions. One should be a free man wherever he is placed.

How much time people spend in thinking of the things they want! And after they get them they are not happy--they want something else. We should learn to be happy now, by thinking of God and renouncing in our minds the desire for anything else. One does not have to retire to the jungle to do this. It takes more courage to live in the jungle of civilization and be serviceful to others. But wherever our duties lie, we should be free men. The cobwebs and dust of delusion and habits that accumulate in our minds must all be cleaned away. Anyone can be free, today, by changing his consciousness from that of a mortal to that of a divine being. Every night we are freed from the consciousness of the body, of possessions. The Lord takes us into that state where we are free from all burdens of existence and are neither man nor woman, rich nor poor, diseased nor healthy. In that consciousness lies happiness and freedom. Man subconsciously knows that he is made in the image of

God, but realization of this truth is latent because he has not concentrated on that side of life. Man tends to concentrate on the "show" that his soul is seeing through the senses of the physical body. His body and this earth are a part of that show. God has already shown me how this film is going to continue. When you see it beforehand you can understand that it is only in fun; but just the same, when the events really happen it is very hard to remember that it is only a show. Even Jesus said, on the cross, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34). The delusion of the reality of this show is very strong, but he overcame it. And Christ taught that all men may overcome it.

The Lord as Krishna said to his disciple Arjuna: "My delusion is very hard to conquer, yet it is very easy for those who persevere." No matter how many times one may fall down or fail, he should never stop trying to overcome delusion. We have limitless power within ourselves with which to be conquerors in the greatest tests that God can give us. Saint Teresa prayed to the Lord, "Don't lessen my sufferings. Let me serve fully my term." Yet the average person dreads disease, and becomes rebellious toward God whenever he suffers. That rebellion comes because we are not in tune with the Infinite. He who is in tune with God can overcome the greatest sufferings in life. Though this cosmic dream is often a terrible nightmare, when we become one with the Lord we will see that we are free from it.

UNSELFISH
ACTIVITY Constantly thinking of oneself is another root cause of suffering and failure to progress. We should think of others; and especially of God's work. If for a certain time each day we commune with God, it is good; but we should also work for Him. The Lord says, in the Bhagavad Gita, "I have attained all things, yet I work on. And those who would be free must work, not for themselves, but for Me." What a difference that makes in life! Why seek only one's own comfort? It is so much better to take away somebody else's suffering. To the spiritual man, giving is so much more satisfying than doing for oneself. The average worldly man, on the other hand, thinks nothing of spending for himself; but when he gives a dollar to charity he is all puffed up over his generosity.

Those who desire to increase the comforts of others, who feel happiness in making others happy, will change for the better. He who ceases to live selfishly and, rather, lives for others, may escape all those mental tyrants of wrong habits that he has been feeding in his brain. He will be able to overthrow the feudal kings of habit that have dominated his reactions. We must dethrone wrong habits and become free, one with the Lord. Why should we seek possession of things that don't belong to us? It is better to seek more balance, more self-control, more calmness. Once we have acquired these qualities, we shall be able to take them with us when we leave this earth, to help us in future existences. We are all children of God and we are going to win eventually. Meanwhile it is better to live, if necessary with a crippled body--diseased, dumb, forsaken by all--and know that one is in tune with God, than to be healthy and wealthy and without any thought of the divine goal of life.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Why live an aimless life, without recognizing your powers, without understanding how you can develop those powers? In order to know God, you must live a full life.

Try to please God in everything you do and you will live rightly. The best way to please God is to satisfy both your logical reasoning and your conscience. We have been gifted with reason, and when we do wrong, our reason or our hearts will tell us so. Whether you think you believe in God or not, if you have reasoning power and a conscience, there will be at least a subconscious belief in God.

BUDDHA AND THE COURTESAN--Part 2

Lord Buddha and his disciples were all vowed to celibacy and renunciation of carnal love for the opposite sex. In the course of their missionary travels with Buddha, a curious incident extremely puzzled his disciples as to the character of their master. The great Buddha was resting with them beneath the cool shade of a tree when a courtesan, attracted by the glowing body and face of the master, drew near. No sooner had she beheld the celestial face of Lord Buddha than she fell in love with him, and in an ecstasy of overwhelming emotion ran with open arms to embrace and kiss him, loudly exclaiming: "O Beautiful Shining One, I love thee!"

The celibate disciples were extremely astonished when they heard Buddha say to the courtesan: "Beloved, I love thee too, but do not touch me now--not yet."

She replied: "Thou dost call me beloved and I love thee, why dost thou object to my touching thee?"

The great Buddha replied: "Beloved, I tell thee again, I will touch thee later, but not now. I will prove my true love for thee." As Buddha saw that she was still not satisfied with his answer, he explained further: "Have faith, beloved! Do not doubt my words. Later when those that now love thee have deserted thee I will come." The disciples were extremely shocked, and some thought that the master had fallen in love with the courtesan.

Years later, as Buddha was meditating with his disciples, he suddenly cried out: "I must go! My beloved, the courtesan, is calling me. She needs me now and I must fulfill my promise to her." As he spoke he rose and hurried off. The disciples ran pell-mell after their master, in the vague hope of rescuing him from the temptress.

The great master and his worried disciples came at last to the same

tree where long ago they had met the courtesan; and what do you think they saw? She lay there, her once beautiful body honeycombed with putrefying, odorous smallpox sores. The disciples cringed and kept some distance from her, but Lord Buddha sat down beside her. Lifting her decaying body on his lap he whispered in her ear: "Beloved, I have come to prove my love for thee, and to fulfill my promise to touch thee. I have waited a long time to demonstrate my true love, but I love thee when everyone else has ceased loving thee; I touch thee when all thy summer friends do not want to touch thee anymore." Saying this, Buddha healed the courtesan and asked her to join his family of disciples.

Personal love is limiting, selfish, and considers its own comforts, usually at the cost of everyone else's. Divine love is unselfish and seeks the happiness of the object of love, and is not limited or partial. God loves the wicked and the good alike, for they are His children; so all those who aspire to know Him must prove to Him that their love is like His love. When a devotee proves to the Heavenly Father that he loves his good and evil brothers equally, then the Divine Father will say: "My noble son, thy love I accept, for thou dost love all with My love." To love those who love you is natural, but to love those who do not love you is to be supernatural and to know God in all.

AFFIRMATION

I will be calmly active, actively calm. I will not be lazy and become mentally ossified. Nor will I be overactive, becoming like a machine; able to earn money, but unable to enjoy life. I will meditate regularly to gain balance.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MANIFEST THYSELF IN THE STRENGTH OF THY LIGHT

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Eternal Light, pour down through our thoughts, through our feelings, and through our emotions. Eternal Love, pour down through our love and make us feel Thy presence. Eternal Power, pour down through our wisdom and inflame us with Thy Consciousness. Purify the dross in us and banish disease and poverty from the world evermore. Banish ignorance from the shores of our souls. Lead us from darkness to light, from ignorance to wisdom, from sorrow to bliss, from insincerity to sincerity.

May the spirit of the dawn, the spirit of the Infinite Light, abide with us, saturating our souls with the Infinite Consciousness: and may His glory pour into our beings. May His presence be felt on every altar of consciousness. May the glory of the Infinite be with us. On the day of the sun, may the sunlight of wisdom burst forth from behind the darkness of our minds, and may that great outpouring of light, that great outpouring of power, that great outpouring of peace and happiness, that great outpouring of joy, abide with us.

O living Christ, present in the body of Jesus and in all of us, manifest Thyself in the essence of Thy glory, in the strength of Thy light, and in the power of Thy wisdom. Come into the cradle of our consciousness, that we may worship Thee in the light of wisdom and in understanding and truth.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, teach me to remember Thee in sickness or in health. Teach me to open my closed eyes of unbelief and behold Thine instantaneously healing light.

THE LAW OF DIVINE HEALING--Part 1

Perfect health is given by God as part of man's divine birthright. Disease is man-made. A baby who is born blind, or who is in any way mentally or physically handicapped, brings from a former existence the mental seed-cause of such a condition. All disease tendencies, whether carried over from a past life or newly created through transgressions of natural laws in this life, are results of human error. God wants all His children to enjoy health and happiness, but man creates disease and sorrow for himself by breaking God's laws.

Suppose that after having enjoyed good health for fifty years you have now been sick for three years, unable to obtain healing by any method. Probably you have forgotten about the length of time that you enjoyed good health and laughed at the idea of sickness. Now the situation is exactly opposite. Just because you have been sick for three years, you probably have come to think that you will never be well again. So is the mental attitude affected by temporary physical conditions.

There are diseases of bacterial invasion that result from breaking laws of physical hygiene. There are maladies of mental bacterial invasion--of fear, anger, worry, greed, temptation, and lack of self-control--that result from disobeying the mental laws of being; and there are diseases that arise from spiritual ignorance. Do not forget that ignorance of God is the mother of all physical, mental, and spiritual diseases. Abolish ignorance by contacting God and forthwith body, mind, and soul will be healed of all maladies.

Disease results when the brittle, inharmonious manifestations of objective life collide with the stone wall of divine soul harmony within. God is harmony; and when man, who is made in His image, tries to lead an inharmonious life, he hurts himself. A stone wall does not willfully hurt the knuckles of a man who strikes it. The man hurts himself through his failure to understand the effect of striking his knuckles on the wall. So God is not punishing man. Man punishes himself whenever he reaps the results of self-created wrong actions. Peaceful actions attune the mind with the peace of God found in the silence of deep meditation, and the result is happiness.

HUMAN METHODS OF CURE NOT PERMANENT The necessity of seeking a sure method of permanently curing physical, mental, and spiritual ills becomes apparent. Permanent cure of all troubles means complete nonrecurrence of bacterial disease, of physical harm through accidents, or of any difficulty arising from a mental or spiritual cause. As repeated visualization of a table laden with good food

neither materializes the food nor satisfies one's hunger (unless he be a highly advanced yogi!), so also the visualization of health, although it may encourage the mind or offer temporary relief, does not bring permanent health, which is possible only when we behold God in the body-temple. Then, instead of simply feeling that God is in the body, we actually perceive the soul, mind, and body to be a perfect manifestation of God Himself. It is only after such realization, which may be brought about by deep practice of these Lessons, that the body remains permanently healed.

No doubt some medicines have healing power, since God gave herbs and minerals power to affect the body of man. Only a man who can drink a bottle of potassium cyanide without any ill effect may speak with authority of the delusive nature of medicine or matter. We know from experience that medicine has power to heal, as is demonstrated by the wonderful healings effected by good drugs and the treatment administered by good doctors; but it should be remembered that medicine and doctors have limits to their powers, and confess their helplessness when confronted with some chronic diseases. Therefore, to put your entire trust in medicine rather than in God's unlimited healing power is sure to bring disillusionment.

Medical science cannot guarantee the nonrecurrence of physical disease, nor can it promise complete healing of mental disease and the spiritual disease of ignorance. Nor does the layman's search for a mental or spiritual cure through reading books or by following the advice of friends insure permanent healing of mental and soul troubles. To drink all the medicines, undergo all the operations, or to read all the holy books in the world would still give only temporary relief, for none of these methods actually destroys the possibility of recurrence of man's three-fold suffering of body, mind and soul. What is that universal panacea that will destroy pain, accidents, and ignorance--forever--so that body, mind, and soul may reappear as a perfect image of Spirit?

HEALING Just as the thought of swallowing medicine does not heal a
THROUGH bodily disease, so just the imaginary contact of God through
PRAYER blind prayers does not produce the desired healing; but as
 darkness cannot remain where light is, so the darkness of
disease is driven away when the light of God's perfect presence is actually felt and perceived in the body. Few people realize this truth. Most people are merely making wishes when they think they feel an overpowering desire for healing. They pray with disbelief in their hearts, or with a sense of hopelessness, thinking that God will not listen to prayers; or they pray and do not wait to find out if their prayer has reached God.

Convince the mind first that all human methods of cure are limited in their healing power, and that only God's all-permeating, all-healing power is unlimited. While sitting in silence in the morning and evening, and whenever you have time during the day, mentally affirm: "Father, Thine unlimited and all-healing power is in me. Manifest Thy light through the darkness of my ignorance."

Continuous personal zeal should be put forth. Whether God seems to respond or not, one should never cease broadcasting loving thoughts to

Him. The beginner in devotion should not be discouraged if God does not respond to his immediate intense demands. God never fails to listen to all soul-calls, but He does not always respond in the way that we want Him to respond. He has His own mysterious ways. Besides, He consciously responds only when He is sure that the devotee wants Him and Him alone. That is why some saints have been tested with disease, or extreme poverty, or temptation. When found to prefer God to health, life, abundance, or temptation, they passed the test; then God came. If one persists long enough in seeking, one will surely find God at the end of the trail.

Pray intelligently, with a bursting soul, seldom loudly, mostly mentally, without displaying to anyone what is happening within. Pray with the utmost devotion, knowing that God is listening to everything you are mentally affirming. Pray until He replies to you through the intelligible voice of boundless bursting joy tingling through every body cell and every thought; or through true visions depicting what you should do. Pray unceasingly until you are absolutely sure of the divine contact, then claim your physical, mental, or spiritual needs from the Most High as your divine birthright.

Never mind if you cannot see God or hear His knock at the gate of your heart. For a long time you have been running away from Him, hiding in the marshes of the senses. It is the noise of your own rowdy passions and the flight of your heavy footsteps in the material world that have made you unable to hear His call within. Stop, be calm, pray steadfastly, and out of the silence will loom the divine Presence.

Before going to bed, and upon awakening, mentally and deeply try to broadcast your message: "I and my Father are One," or "Father, receive me as Thy son," until your mind microphone, broken by hammers of restlessness, is divinely repaired and able to transmit your demand to God. As a broken microphone cannot broadcast a message, so a restless mind cannot transmit prayers to God. Your prayers are not answered because you have become a prodigal son, roaming in the land of material limitations, and you pray as a beggar instead of demanding what is yours as a son of God, Owner of the universe.

Some persons might protest, saying, "I know my prayers are answered, for I hear God talking to me. I have demonstrated His response to my prayers." The thing is, are you sure that your prayers actually reached God, and that He consciously responded to them? What is the proof? Suppose you have prayed for healing and that you have become well. Do you know whether your cure is due to natural causes, or to medicine, or to your own or another's prayers that brought help from God? Sometimes there is no causal relation between the prayer and the cure. You might have been healed even if you had not prayed. This is the reason why we should find out whether we may scientifically employ the law of cause and effect through prayer. The sages of India found that God responds to law. Those who have experienced this response have said that all people who conform to the law may test and experience it for themselves. Physical laws have to be interpreted by the physical senses and judged by the understanding. Divine laws have to be comprehended by concentration, meditation, and awakened intuition.

THOUGHTS TO LIVE BY

Disease signifies discomfort; therefore we dislike it. Physical disease comes to us because of our conscious or unconscious transgression of the laws of health and hygiene, and we desire to be free of its pain and discomfort. Prevention is better than cure because every disease leaves its mark in some form, and it is only by following the laws of physical, mental, and spiritual health that man can be happy. Without health, happiness is almost impossible. Therefore, learn how to live, and then act upon that knowledge if you would be healthy and happy.

No one is more willing to send to you vibratory healing for your health, for your financial condition, for your peace of mind, and for your spiritual development than your own Father, God. But when you use your God-given independence unwisely you fail to receive God's healing messages. Most people tend to be overconfident in limited man-made methods of healing, of achieving prosperity, or of getting to know God, and so cut themselves off from His help.

When wealth only is lost, nothing of real value is lost, for if one has health and skill one can still be happy and can make more money; but if health is lost, then most happiness is also lost; and when contact with the Principle of life is lost, all happiness and all health are lost.

THE MAN WHO BECAME A BUFFALO

On the side of a mountain in India, overlooking a beautiful flower-decked valley, was a cozy hermitage. This hermitage was actually a cave, carved out of a rocky ledge of the mountain. Here dwelt a great master and a devoted disciple. When dawn wiped away the darkness from the face of the hills, their slopes smiled brightly with many-colored blossoms. The master and the disciple sang hymns together with the rising sun--which reminded them of the awakening of wisdom after a long sleep of ignorance. They smiled when nature smiled after her silence of the night.

While dawn still lingered over the valley, the master would ask the disciple to sit upright in the perfect meditating posture and to listen to his teachings with absorbed attention. Every day the disciple eagerly devoured the lessons falling from the lips of his master. One day, however, the master noticed that his young disciple was absentminded and restless, so he gently said to him: "Son, today your mind is not on my words, and it seems to be wandering over the hills elsewhere. Pray tell me, what it is that causes your absentmindedness?" The disciple respectfully replied: "Honored Master, I cannot concentrate on your lesson today, for my mind is helplessly thinking about our newly acquired tame buffalo which is grazing on the green verdure of the valley."

The guru, instead of scolding the disciple, calmly asked him to retire into the silence chamber, close the door, and think of nothing but the buffalo. One day passed, and the next morning the master looked

through the little window in the silence chamber. The disciple was still concentrating upon the buffalo. So the master asked: "Son, what are you doing?" The disciple answered: "Sir, I am grazing with the buffalo. Shall I come to you?" The master replied: "No, son, not yet; go on grazing with your buffalo."

On the third morning the master again looked through the window of the silence chamber and inquired, "Beloved child, what are you doing?" To which the disciple, in the state of ecstasy, replied: "Heavenly Master, I behold the buffalo in my room, and I am feeding it. Shall I come to you with my buffalo?" "Not yet, my son, go on with the vision of the buffalo, and of feeding it."

On the fifth day, the master questioned, "Pray tell me, my son, what you are doing now?" The disciple bellowed, in a buffalo-like voice: "What do you mean? I am not your son. I am the buffalo!" To this the master smilingly retorted: "All right, Mr. Buffalo, you had better come out of the silence room." The disciple would not come out. "How can I get out through that narrow door?" he rumbled. "My horns are too big!" Then the master went into the silence chamber and brought the erstwhile "buffalo" out of his trance. The disciple smiled to find himself walking on all fours, trying to imitate the object of his concentration.

Then the disciple, after a light repast, went to listen to the words of his guru. He was asked many deep, spiritual questions, all of which he answered correctly, as never before. At last the guru remarked: "Now your concentration has reached the perfect state, when you and your mind can be one with the object of study."

You can begin, now, to try to make yourself one with the object of your concentration. Practice constantly. Whether you are thinking of a great businessman and his ability, or thinking about God, think deeply; concentrate deeply, until you feel that you have become that businessman or have become one with God.

AFFIRMATION

O Heavenly Father, Thou art in my affected body part. It is well--for Thou art there. O Heavenly Father, Thou art perfect. I am made in Thine image. I am perfect.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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MAKE ME LOVE WITH THY LOVE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

Heavenly Father, make me feel
That Thou art working through my hands
And walking through my feet.
Heavenly Spirit, make me realize
That Thou art the power of assimilation in my body,
And the power
Of elimination of all bodily poisons.
Thou art circulating in my veins and arteries,
And throbbing in my heart.

May Thy wisdom work through my brain.
May Thy reason guide my reason.
May Thy will sing forth the direction to my stubborn will.
May Thy feelings softly lead my feelings.
May Thy desires determine my ambitions.
May Thy mercy inspire my kindness.
May Thy sympathy breathe forth my sympathy.

May Thy thoughts be my wisps of thoughts.
May Thine intuition permeate my intuition
And make it faultless.
May Thy determinations point the way
To my resolutions.
May Thine omnipresence vibrate in my being.
May Thy joy be my joy,
And Thy happiness, my thrill.
May Thine ever new Bliss be my Bliss,
And may Thy love conjure my love
To love all with Thy love.

PRAYER

Father, Thou art the fountain of all power, which flows like a silent river through various methods of healing. Bless all who are using Thy physical, mental, and spiritual laws to bring healing to themselves and to others. May they manifest Thy healing power, justly giving to Thee all credit and glory.

THE LAW OF DIVINE HEALING--Part 2

If you continually employ your mental initiative and maintain a willing-to-work attitude all the time, you will find that your blood will be charged with life current, making it immune against the invasion of bacteria. Keep smiling within, pulsating with deep joy, ever ready to act, and spiritually ambitious to help others. These attitudes are not only good exercises for the mind; they also keep the body constantly supplied with fresh Cosmic Energy, which descends into the body through the door of the medulla oblongata.

Strong will power pulls energy from the surrounding conscious cosmic rays into the body through the door of the medulla. Hence you should strengthen your will power and determination in every worthwhile activity, so that your body may be constantly filled and vibrant with life current. By the highly vibrating current of his mind, a man with strong will power can shake out the thought seeds of disease, failure, and ignorance. But the will vibration must be stronger than the vibration of physical disease or mental inharmony. The more chronic a disease is, the stronger, steadier, and more unflinching should be the determination, faith, and effort of the will to get well. "Man shall not live by bread (food chemicals) alone, but by every word (vibration of life energy) that proceedeth (which flows into the body of man) out of the mouth of God (that is, the opening of the medulla oblongata through which the conscious cosmic Life Principle enters the body of man)."

KEEP WINDOWS Human life may be compared to a house fitted with
OF LIFE OPEN three windows: body, mind, and soul. Through these
 openings come pouring into the body three divergent
rays of the one perfect light of God: health rays, faculty rays, and wisdom rays. These triune rays are responsible for the perfect health, mental equanimity, and soul enlightenment of man. As a triune manifestation of God's perfect light, man is truly created in the image of God. But then arises the question: If man is made after God's likeness, why does he suffer in so many ways? The answer is: Man as a divine child shares the independence of the Divine Being. Since he is essentially a god, created in the image of the Father, man has the privilege of free choice even as the great God. He may exercise that free choice, if he so wills, either to obscure with error the divine soul image or to keep it dazzling with rays of health, power, and peace.

Man has the peculiar independence and power to live in the house of life with the health-, strength-, and light-giving windows either open or

closed. When he closes the windows of life, he shuts out the conscious cosmic ultraviolet rays and lives in the darkness of physical disease, mental disquietude, or abysmal soul ignorance. Most people have had one or more of their windows of life shut and jammed for years. That is why they suffer from chronic maladies. Their rescue lies in the knowledge and application of the law by which they may open the windows of body, mind, and soul, and bask once more in the all-healing conscious cosmic rays.

When he becomes ill, man instinctively wants instantaneous healing by God's power. What he fails to understand is that the power to bring about healing lies within himself, and it is up to him to put that power to work. God is not responsible for man's sickness, nor for his healing, because God originally gave man the privilege of free choice to receive His all-healing rays or to shut them out. The results of man's choice are governed by the cosmic law. God may not be bribed by special ceremonies to make arbitrary changes in His law. Nor does He respond to blind prayer, or out of partiality. He may be moved only by man's cooperation with the law and by love. Love is law. When man has kept the windows of his life closed indefinitely to the light of God, it is man who should make the effort to open those windows again to let in the freely-willing-to-help, knocking-to-enter, healing light of God.

All physical diseases, psychological inharmonies, and spiritual maladies born of ignorance come from man's own fault of shutting out the rays of God. And the logical, lawful conclusion is: whether he shuts the health-giving windows of life knowingly or unknowingly, he must by self-effort open them again. Ignorance of the law may not be used as an excuse for escaping the effects of breaking the law. There are many ways of opening the three jammed windows of life. All may be generally classified as "healing"--physical healing; psychological healing of worries, fears, nervousness, and so forth; and spiritual healing of soul-ignorance.

SPIRITUAL DISEASE Spiritual disease results from ignorance of the art of preserving the perfect image of God within us. It manifests itself in lack of soul peace, want of poise, discontentment, restlessness, unbalance, inharmony, unkindness, unwillingness to meditate, and the habit of putting off meditation.

REMOVE SPIRITUAL DISEASE BY:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1. Moderation | 6. Self-control |
| 2. Hygienic living | 7. Control of life force |
| 3. Right posture | 8. Withdrawal from senses |
| 4. Proper breathing | 9. Self-perception |
| 5. Spiritual and physical exercises | 10. Transcendental ecstasy |
| | 11. Meditation and reversing life force |

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISEASE Psychological diseases are caused by ignorance, lack of good company, lack of good judgment, bad karma, bad heredity, and wrong instincts. Psychological disease consists of susceptibility to temptation, fear, anger, greed, jealousy, worry,

revengefulness, avarice, hate, gossiping, unkindness, mental and physical laziness, discontent, absentmindedness, untrustfulness, melancholia, bigotry, lack of introspection, and lack of self-analysis.

HEALING OF PSYCHOLOGICAL DISEASE

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Concentration | 5. Power of creating or dislodging |
| 2. Self-control | habits at will |
| 3. Good company | 6. Introspective judgment |
| 4. Will power | |

The Self-Realization Fellowship Energization Exercises, described in Lessons 5,6,7,8,8-A,9, and 34, when practiced regularly and perfectly, will automatically dislodge psychological and physical diseases.

PHYSICAL DISEASE Physical diseases are many and are caused principally by the weakening of the life force. Learn to absorb the vital electric current from your brain battery by self-control and by freeing the mind from temptation.

OTHER CAUSES OF PHYSICAL DISEASE

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. Lack of self-control and resulting loss of vitality | 4. Overeating |
| 2. Want of proper exercise | 5. Lack of mental peace |
| 3. Want of proper eating | 6. Lack of proper meditation |

VITAL HEALING EXERCISE

Practice of the SRF Energization Exercises helps to concentrate the mind and energy principally on exercising and healing. All methods of healing are limited in their effectiveness unless one knows that their potency comes from the sole unlimited power of God that is working behind them, and that His Power of healing is almighty and is sufficient in itself.

To send vital healing power to any body part, first inhale, holding the breath in the lungs and visualizing it as being converted into energy. Visualize that energy as reinforcing the energy in the medulla oblongata. Then concentrate at the point between the eyebrows and centralize the energy there, feeling it as a warm force; direct the energy from the point between the eyebrows to the diseased part, feeling its power burning up disease. Exhale.

When performing exercises with instruments, one is principally conscious of the instruments; whereas the consciousness of the muscles is secondary. Furthermore, one is almost unconscious of the vital and mental parts of the exercises, as when doing "the daily dozen" with dumbbells while the mind is concentrated upon toast and coffee.

In muscular exercises, that is, when the muscles control the action, the consciousness is in the muscular movement. Energy is brought into play only as a secondary factor, and the mind is used in the background.

In mental exercises, a slight amount of vital force may be injected, principally through the power of will and imagination into the muscles or bodily parts. Sick people, invalids, or those who want to develop concentration, should practice mental healing exercises.

MENTAL HEALING EXERCISE

Concentrate on both feet and imagine a warm electric force trickling all over the soles. Do the same with the calves, thighs, hips, abdomen, intestines, navel, stomach, liver, kidneys, spine, heart, left and right lungs, each of the fingers, palms, forearms, upper arms, throat, eyes, ears, nostrils, mouth, back of head, and top of head (in the middle). Feel the tingling, vitalizing sensation in every part of your body, and especially wherever there is disease or weakness. After you have concentrated on all the body parts, then concentrate the mind on the weak or diseased part again and mentally chant "Om." Try to feel that a warm electric force is being generated by the mental chanting of "Om." Chant Om fifteen times as you concentrate on each weak place or bodily part.

When the law is fulfilled; as when one is completely willing and un-failing in his enthusiastic practice on the foregoing methods, and has full faith in God, then healing can be instantaneous; it will germinate and grow like a seed that has been planted in properly prepared soil. Plough your mind with concentration and put the seeds of spiritual exercises therein; water them regularly with faith; then you may harvest spiritual abundance.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

There are three kinds of healing: physical, mental, and spiritual. Physical healing is required when the body is in a state of disease; mental healing is needed when the mind is in a state of inharmony; spiritual healing is necessary when the soul is in a state of ignorance. Physical illness can be banished only by right living; mental inharmony can be destroyed only by consciously attaining the state of peace; and spiritual ignorance can be healed only by wisdom.

WANDERINGS OF THE PRODIGAL SOUL

By Paramahansa Yogananda

The prodigal soul wandered away from the bosom of Spirit. It roamed on tracts of incarnations, gathering many hard experiences. It slept in the heart of minerals, buried deep in the soil; slumbered and moved in the deep sea spaces where perpetual winter and darkness reign. Crushed and pounded out of the metals, it fled into the corridors of plant life, wandering through labyrinthine veins of tender leaves and fragrant blossoms, emerging at last in the living halls of birds and animals. Finally, it tore off its animal garments and put on robes of human flesh.

Hypnotized by human experiences, the prodigal soul became self-exiled, imprisoning its omnipresence in the poverty and limitation of the physical body. At last the soul awakened to the dreariness of its experiences of countless incarnations--the endless repetition of the wild dance with death and the subsequent ejection from the mansions of minerals, clay, stardust, dreaming blossoms, sentient animals, and the unique human body.

Now the prodigal soul is back in his Father's mansion of omnipresence and omniscience. He remembers the nightmares of his wanderings through incarnations, the horrid dance with death that crushed him and made him think he existed no longer.

Now he sees that no matter how he was treated, his immortality was evident. He realizes that it isn't necessary to go through any more nightmares of experiences, wandering in tattered robes of incarnations, or going naked in Spirit.

Now the prodigal soul wants to travel of his own volition in the dreamland of incarnations, working with the souls of minerals, blossoms, animals, and men, to guide them from their wanderings back to their real home--the mansion of omnipresence. The prodigal soul now wants to reincarnate in the slums of material existence until all wandering brothers of minerals, plants, beasts, and men are brought back to their Father's Home of complete freedom.

AFFIRMATION

O Father, Thou art in my mind--I am
Thou. O Father, Thou art strength; Thou art
in me--I am strength.

Self-Realization Fellowship Lesson

"Thy Self-realization will blossom forth from thy soulful study"



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THE REBEL KING, IGNORANCE

By Paramahansa Yogananda

O Transcendent Teacher, in the chamber of soul stillness I asked Thee:

What is sin?

Thine essential silence became secret articulations of my intuition; I understood Thine answer:

Sin is the rebel king, Ignorance.

The originator and pioneer of all suffering, Ignorance is the mysterious root of the tree of ill-health, the source of every type of mental inefficiency, and the primal cause of man's soul blindness.

Stealthily reigning within unenlightened minds, the evil Emperor maintains sinister courtiers: inertia, greed, false convictions, selfish ambitions, ignoble thoughts.

They destroy all crops of nourishing spirituality. In many men the harvest of faith, ripe for the reaping, has been cruelly trampled down by the dragoons of doubt.

May we dethrone Darkness by witnessing within us Thy triumphal coronation, O Eternal Sovereign of Light!

--From "Whispers from Eternity"

PRAYER

O Father, Thine unlimited and all-healing power is in me.
Manifest Thy light through the darkness of my ignorance.

THE DIVINE LAW OF HEALING--Part 3

The life of all matter and of all living creatures depends principally upon the immanent cosmic life energy and on the sunlight coming from without. Diseases start when these two great energies fail to enter the system in sufficient force to maintain good health. Hence one should know the various avenues through which these energies may most effectively penetrate the body. In addition to the individual potencies of the life force and sunlight, there is a great deal of reaction between them. It is the reaction between the commingling forces of the sunlight and life force that helps to support the human body.

Doubt, mental fatigue, worry, indifference, boredom, fear, restlessness, timidity, mental and physical laziness, overindulgence in anything, unmethodical life, lack of interest, and lack of creative initiative are counteracting static agents that make it impossible for cosmic energy to tune in with man. Working with interest and desire to help others, creative spiritual ambition, calmness, courage, an unconquerable attitude, tolerance, patience, and peace are avenues through which cosmic energy can help you.

This great law some know, but few put into actual practice:

If you continuously persist in thinking that your body is full of vitality, especially at times when it is weak, you will have started to open up a new, secret, invisible means of vitalizing yourself.

The Bible and other world scriptures tell us: "Man is made in God's image." Realize by meditation, which develops intuition and bestows on the devotee direct experience of Reality, that the life and vitality in your body, mind, and soul remain ever undiminished. Realize that only thought and consciousness exist as permanent realities. Matter may be cognized only through ideas; strive to realize, therefore, that in working you are not using up energy, but using up thoughts of energy or materialized ideas; hence, you would never feel physical weakness if you were continually to draw energy and enthusiasm from your own thoughts.

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| PERFORM ALL DUTIES | Always perform small as well as important duties |
| WITH ATTENTION | with deep attention, remembering that God is guiding |
| AND CHEERFULNESS | ing and stimulating every worthwhile effort you are making to achieve a noble ambition. With the |

consciousness of God in your actions, and with the performance of noble actions, God's ceaseless cosmic energy will enter your body. His power invisibly stimulates your circulation and creative activity.

Life force enters the body through the agency of an interested, joyous attitude--it doesn't respond to a half-dead will! Learn to perform all your duties with a courageous cheerfulness welling up from within you. Then, as you perform your daily activities, you will see that a flood of vitality will move through all your muscles and through your entire body. Perform your daily duties with deepest happiness, thinking that you are not working for yourself alone but also for God and His children, all as a part of humanity and not apart from humanity. If you do this, undreamed-of power and happiness will come to you.

While the muscles and limbs of your body are busily engaged in performing your duties, visualize a halo of God's cosmic energy surrounding your body, and feel that you can never become tired again because your tissues are being renewed, supplied with current from that energy and not merely from food or oxygen. Hold fast to the thought that no matter how much physical energy you use up, you can bring it back by peace-born smiles. Try to remain peaceful under all circumstances, and let the peace "plant" blossom forth into flowers of smiles. Give smiles to others as you expect others to smile with you.

HELIOTROPIC METHOD OF SELF-HEALING

[Please review precautions in leaflet "Sunlight and Good Health" sent with Lesson 5.]

It should be noted that the life force in the body must be kept alert, for it is this force that vitalizes and chemicalizes the most important of all energies, that of the sun. Ultraviolet rays are ineffective on a dead man. The method of simultaneously using life force and sunlight for healing is called the heliotropic or heliotherapeutic method. Each one of the following methods is intended to quicken the life force by combining it with the sun's rays, creating a great force for the healing of different body parts. Ordinary sunbaths are partially effective, but much is yet to be learned about harnessing sunlight to life force for therapeutic purposes.

Practice the following methods in the morning or late afternoon hours. Depending on the intensity of the sun's rays and the sensitivity of one's skin, it is best to avoid the midday sun.

FOR COLDS: Every day lie flat on your back on a woolen blanket in the sunlight. Expose chest, thighs, and feet. Open mouth wide and turn head up so that sunlight can penetrate your mouth and nostrils. While doing this, gently quiver your head by tensing it, concentrating upon the mucous membranes of the nose and throat. Think that the energy you are sending by the vibration of quivering is absorbing and transmuting the sunlight into a hot healing force that is passing through these passages lined with mucous membrane, and helping to banish disease germs. Practice for fifteen minutes.

For Chest Colds: Let the sunlight shine on the chest while you are in a sitting or lying position. Rapidly but gently rub chest, injecting energy into it through your hands. Mentally visualize

that the life force in your hands is reacting on the sunlight falling on your chest to create a new force that is very effective in destroying disease germs of the respiratory organs. This exercise should last up to half an hour. Practice both morning and afternoon, and before meals, or when your stomach is empty. It has been found effective to fast once a week on orange juice, with only fruits and nuts for dinner. This is especially beneficial for persons suffering with catarrh.

FOR HEADACHES: Let sunlight fall freely on your head and face. Keep eyes closed. Rub rapidly with your fingers the entire scalp, forehead, back part of head, and the sides of head. As you rub, think that you are mixing with the sunlight the life force flowing through your fingers, and that you are pouring this mixed solution of healing light on your head and saturating the pores with it. Do this for ten minutes and you will realize the great power of this exercise.

YOGIC EYE EXERCISE: The light from the sun has in it great healing rays, and also very destructive rays. To look at the sun at noon may blind you, because at that hour the actinic and other destructive rays overbalance the healing rays. The yogis advise that under no circumstances should one look at the sun except during the first hour after sunrise and the hour before sunset.

Early in the morning, during the first hour after sunrise, and early in the evening, during the last hour before sunset, the destructive rays of the sun are filtered out by the earth's atmosphere, and the healing rays pass through. One may then safely practice the following eye exercise taught by the yogis of India.

Stare into the sun with the eyes open and unwinking as long as you can without discomfort. Practice this a half minute to a minute at first, gradually increasing the time to not more than nine minutes.

After staring at the sun with wide open eyes as directed above, blink the eyes rapidly for one full minute.

Close eyes and turn your back to the sun.

Put the right hand over the eyes and the left hand over the right hand. You will see the image of the sun, which is still retained on the retina of the eye. Concentrate upon that image and visualize all the healing rays of the sun coming into your eyes through that sun which you see with closed eyes. That is actually what happens.

Keep the hands over the eyes. When the image of the sun begins to fade, move the eyeballs up, to the right, down, to the left, and so on, repeating this rotation with a little tension, and visualizing energy from the sun flowing into the eyes and strengthening them.

Then take the hands away and squeeze the eyes shut, holding them shut to the count of twelve; then relax. Repeat twice more, tensing to the count of twelve and relaxing, making a total of three times.

Practice this exercise only ONCE A DAY, either morning or evening.

FOR RHEUMATISM: Expose to the sunlight the part affected with rheumatism. Contract that part gently. Hold. Then, while that part is contracted, use your fingers to rub it rapidly. Do this for two minutes, thinking that the life force in the contracted body part and in your fingers, and the sunlight, are helping to eliminate your trouble. Then relax the body part. Repeat five times every day.

FOR ANEMIA AND NERVOUSNESS: Sit facing sunlight with the chest, arms, and thighs exposed. Gently tense the entire body, energizing it. Relax tension and with your palms rub forehead, throat, chest, abdomen, and thighs rapidly for two minutes. Turn so the sunlight is falling on your back. Tense the entire body, energizing it. Relax tension and briskly rub back of neck, shoulders, back, and buttocks. Repeat this entire exercise ten times. During this exercise, think that the life energy in your hands and body, and the sunlight, combine to make a powerful healing light for the body. You can also benefit from contracting the feet and rubbing the soles while exposing them to sunlight.

FOR WOUNDS, SORES, AND SKIN TROUBLE: Expose the diseased or injured part to sunlight, then gently contract and relax that part for ten minutes. During this exercise, think that the life force is healing the sore.

OBSTRUCTORS OF SUNLIGHT

- (1) Glass windows; sunlight coming through a closed window is of no value as the vitalizing rays are shut out. It is necessary to use the direct rays of the sun.
- (2) Clothing.
- (3) Clogged pores of the body--owing to infrequent bathing, or hasty baths without rubbing; staying indoors; or going only from home to office (or other places) and back without any exercise in the fresh air en route.

SUN IS THE LIFE OF EVERYTHING The ancient Orientals worshiped the sun as the life of everything, including the body. They were real "sun worshipers." They meditated in the open with bare bodies, so that the thirsty life force could drink ultraviolet rays through the pores of the skin.

Modern man, with his indoor life and too much clothing, creates darkness in his body temple, inviting demons of bacteria to start their dance of disease and destruction. Become a true sun worshiper, loving the Sun of Life within and outside your body.

One who follows the preceding instructions for the vitaheliotropic method of healing flushes his body pores with cheerful vitality from within, and with unobstructed sunlight from without. Such a vitalized man dwells in a temple of living energy, in which the powers of mind and wisdom love to come and remain.

THOUGHTS TO REMEMBER

Although you should take care of the body and should follow the right laws of living, do not allow your efforts in this direction to become a preoccupation that consumes all your time. Do not make health the ruling factor in your life. Healing the soul also heals both body and mind. When you have healed your soul of ignorance you have also healed your mind and your body, for the darkness of mental inharmonies and physical disease can no longer exist when the light of wisdom enters your body temple.

MEDITATION TECHNIQUE

Meditate with closed eyes, beholding the darkness behind your eyelids. Mentally say: "I dissolve my body in darkness." Forget the body, watching the limitless dark space of eternity spread above, beneath, in front, behind, ahead, everywhere. Now visualize a sealed balloon of rainbow light surrounding you. Throw the breath out very slowly, visualizing your breath as light that is filling and expanding the balloon. Remember, this balloon of light cannot burst, no matter how much you blow into it. Continue expanding the rainbow balloon of light with your luminous breath until it becomes big enough to contain the earth and your body; star clusters, universes, planetary and solar systems--everything.

THAT MORAL BACKBONE

Long ago, near a rock outside a village in India, there lived a poisonous, hooded snake. This reptile killed many of the village children with its death-dealing fangs, but he was so sly that every attempt of the villagers to kill him failed. As a last resort, the villagers visited their holy man and entreated him: "Holy Master, please use your spiritual powers to prevent the snake from continuing its gruesome work of murdering our little children."

The saint agreed to comply with their request. He went near the place where the snake lived, and by the magnetic power of his divine love coaxed the snake to come out. Then the saint commanded: "O Snake, desist from biting to death the dear people of my village. Practice nonviolence." With humbled hood the snake promised.

Soon after this incident the saint went on a pilgrimage. It was a year before he returned to the village, but as he passed by the rock where the snake lived he thought of the snake and wondered if it had kept its promise. As he looked about he was astonished to spy the snake in a pool of blood, severe wounds in its back.

When the saint asked what was the matter with him, the snake in a

feeble voice replied: "Holy Preceptor, I have seven wounds in my back as a result of your teachings. Ever since the village children found out that I was harmless, they have pelted me with stones whenever they saw me go out in search of food. Although I have ducked in and out of my hole as quickly as I could, I have received these seven injuries to my spine. Master, at first they fled at the sight of me, but now, because of your teachings of nonviolence, I have to flee from them."

The Hindu master patted the snake on the back and healed him. Then he smilingly rebuked him, saying: "You little fool, I did tell you not to bite; but why didn't you hiss?"

Remember, when you are too much imposed upon by people who take advantage of you, do not spinelessly permit them to hurt you; yet do not inject the poison of injury into them either. Rather, keep such persons at a distance by the use of a few firm statements.

AFFIRMATION

Father, teach me to remember Thee equally in poverty and prosperity, in sickness and health, in ignorance and wisdom. Father, teach me to remember and be grateful for the years of health that I have enjoyed. Teach me to open my closed eyes of unbelief and behold Thine instantaneously healing light.

